

Megiddo Message

The Roll of Fame

*Peace to the just man's memory—let it grow.
Greener with years, and blossom through the flight.
Of ages; let the mimic canvas show
His calm, benevolent features; let the light
Stream on his deeds of love, that shunned the sight
Of all but heaven, and, in the book of Fame,
The glorious record of his virtues write,
And hold it up to men, and bid them claim
A palm like his, and catch from him the hallowed flame.*

—Bryant



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THE REV. L. T. NICHOLS

September 30, 1961

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Instructive Booklets

In addition to the MESSAGE you should by all means read the following booklets. Each booklet is a complete subject of itself. The Bible is made understandable and interesting to study.

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WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?
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THE HOLY SPIRIT
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TRINITY

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Megiddo means

"a place of troops,"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.

"a place of God."

—Young's Analytical Concordance.

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Always, supremacy there has been the envy of the world, and the prevailing nation has guarded it with a jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, God is in this place with a band of troops. Soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

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A Teen-ager, on Words

Dear ———:

I realize the usage of words is important to Christians. Good as well as evil thoughts are derived from the way we express ourselves. Words can be "builder-uppers" as well as they can be destroyers. One important thing is that our salvation depends on the usage of good edifying words—not some of the time, but all the time we speak.

I am now reading the two volumes of the "Known Bible." These books have helped me to rid myself of the darkness of man-made creeds I have been taught. The books are very good reading, and many good points for leading a Christ-like life are contained therein. If only all teen-agers, like you and me, were interested in the Word of God what a different world this would be.

South Amboy, N. J.

J. K.

A Grateful Promise

Dear Sister:

It is always most stimulating, and cheerful to be reminded of the grand things in store for the "Little Flock" who are striving to follow in their Master's footsteps. I am sure, we, who are now enlightened are extremely thankful to God for our wonderful, faithful and wise leader, Brother Nichols, who was the first to bring to us the Light of Truth in a dark place. Oh, this wonderful Truth, which is God's Law and "endureth forever," gives liberty to the captives and opens the prison house of darkness to them that are bound.

Swansea, S. Wales, Eng.

R. B.

Reflection of the Practice

Dear Brother:

We may start the day with good intentions, but it takes much practice to work them out and we must be on our guard continually. We must know when and what to speak and when to keep silent. What an example Peter and John were of whom we read in Acts 4:13. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." We cannot walk with Jesus as they did, but we have His words written for our learning. We, too, must show on our pilgrim journey that we have been with Jesus and speak boldly. We can overcome our weaknesses by letting Christ come more and more into our lives as we read in one of our lessons: "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory" (Col. 1:27).

Some may say, "You can be good, but not perfect," however we cannot alter God's requirements if we want to be saved.

Morrisville, N. Y.

F. G.

An Honest Man

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—Alexander Pope (1733).

ALSO, WE may add, one of the rarest. Not from any divine reluctance to create honest men, but God Himself can not, or does not, make something out of nothing. All nations, we are told in Isaiah 40, are before God "less than nothing and vanity." To become truly honest, men and women must first love and desire this difficult honesty, then work together with God to attain it.

There are various degrees of honesty, as men know it. Perhaps the lowest is that which exists through fear of detection and punishment. Such an individual is in fact dishonest. Barely above this is that honesty which is prompted by opportunism. "Honesty is the best policy," but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man.

Some of the definitions and synonyms of the noble word *honest* are: fair, just, upright, trustworthy, virtuous, honorable, respectable, sincere, frank. Simple definitions, and not at all impossible, yet too rare in this world of selfishness and greed. But the real rarity is the man who meets these exacting specifications: *One who is honest in the highest and fullest sense is scrupulously careful to adhere to all known truth and right, even in thought.* Strait and narrow is the way that leads to this highest degree of honesty, and few there be that find it.

There is dishonesty and to spare in every branch of human endeavor; but the field most barren of honesty is religion. There is a great deal of sincerity, even to the point of fanaticism; but sincerity is not enough. Sincerity never changed one error into a truth; many a sincere mind is utterly closed to evidence and "known truth." Those who doubt this statement are urged to spend a little time in missionary work, trying to place before the people the plainest of revealed truths. Inertia, fear of change, reverence for the past, and plain mental laziness, are the bars which confine the contented masses. The religious leaders are inmates of the same prison house of darkness, "trusties," as it were, or keepers; some interested in their work, some in their salaries, many vain and opinionated, all slaves to a system of error and loving their chains.

It has ever been thus. Some epochs have been better in this respect than the present; one, at least, much worse. The story of mankind is a record of cruelty and greed and bestiality, of superstition and intolerance, of struggle and aspiration, of intellectual development and material progress. The tone of the picture is grey and sombre; rare indeed is the gleam of light and color proclaiming an Honest Man, a man careful to adhere to all truth, even in thought.

When primitive man had acquired sufficient intelligence to reason—for good or ill—the Creator found a region and a race where a few intellectually honest men might be developed, and His work of salvation on this planet began. The preceding æons meant nothing except as a preparation; time is nothing to God, though it seems everything to us. Certain truths were placed before men and amply

confirmed. A minority accepted them, the masses invariably preferring their primitive superstitions, no matter how absurd.

The record of the Scriptures speaks eloquently of the rarity of intellectual and religious honesty. Throughout the pre-Christian centuries the truly honest were but a sprinkling, a saving salt in the midst of a corrupt world. A few prophets, men whose names still shine like stars in the murk of history, stood firm for the Word of Jehovah, regardless of consequences. Through stormy years or quiet interludes, a few unknown heroes walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. The great Expositor of divine honesty lived His short but incomparable life among men, doing good, speaking only the words of His heavenly Father, until He was crucified by dishonest men who placed the security of their system above truth and right.

Twelve honest leaders and a handful of truth-loving followers made the civilized world conscious of their presence within a few years. Though never popular, the Way of Honesty nevertheless gained ground for a few decades. But honesty is difficult, and with the original leaders gone the "mystery of iniquity" began to work; superstitions crept in, men set themselves up as theologians with a system of thought and a set of ideas to defend; and honesty perished in the street. The lamp of truth burned lower and lower as men increasingly refused to adhere to revelation; a little less than six centuries after the resurrection of Christ it flickered and went out in the blackness of the Apostasy. The last honest man was dead.

During these weary centuries the world grew old. Roman civilization, aptly described by Wells as a "violent and vulgar fraud," collapsed into a sea of misery and barbarism. Superstitions grew grosser, intolerance more violent. Human passions, ambitions and strifes filled the world with woe. While the life of the common people was lived very near the beast level, kingdoms rose and fell, races expanded and declined, millions lived and died like insects in the autumn sunlight. From Arabia, from Mongolia, from Tartary, tides of barbaric force deluged Europe, Asia and Africa, only to recede, leaving ruin in their wake. The Black Death desolated a continent; senseless crusades depleted and bankrupted the nations of Christendom; feudalism with its inequalities and absurdities flourished and declined.

Parallel with these events, a closely organized system of error and superstition was gaining and consolidating power in what had been the most civilized nations, craftily enslaving the minds of the masses, punishing dissenters in merciless fashion, exalting itself as the kingdom of Christ on earth, exercising temporal power and even dictating the policies of foreign rulers. By the early years of the seventh century its triumph over true religion was complete, and in a few more centuries, except for what it had lost to its twin delusion, Islam, the power of Rome seemed impregnable. No man might buy or sell

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Angelic Ministration

By the Rev. L. T. Nichols, Founder, Megiddo Mission Church

THE GREAT Galilean Teacher said; "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4: 4). How careful we should be then to eat every word, to live by every word of His mouth, whether it agrees with our way of thinking or not. As we realize the narrowness of the way, whatever course of belief or practice is presented to us, we should ask, Is this in harmony with God? Not, is it in harmony with my natural way of thinking? but, does it proceed from God? Will it be to His honor and glory for me to accept of it?

Nothing can be added to God's Word, or taken from it, for Jesus says that we must live by every word of God. Divine truth is one grand unity and harmony, beautifully linked together. If anything is added to or taken from it, its beauty and symmetry is destroyed.

God has provided us with a golden chain by means of which we may pull ourselves into the Kingdom. We have no power to sever one link. We cannot remove a link anywhere we choose, or the consequence will be a broken chain, and a broken chain will never pull us into the Kingdom of God. Our Master designed every link; and the prophets and apostles have riveted it. The weld has been made; and no man has any power to sever it. The divine edict is: "Every word of God is pure . . . Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30: 5, 6). Jesus Himself said: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22: 18, 19).

There is only one right course to follow: accept this God-given chain and have it around us, then we shall have sufficient courage to endure everything. However great the foe, we shall have strength to meet him. We must eat every word so we can live; we must keep every one of God's commandments, so we can be saved. It is our duty, then, to accept the Word in all its parts. If one can hold to one promise and doubt another promise, and another person can do the same, at length we shall have denied all.

We must all believe alike, must all be speaking the same thing. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, wrote: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10), and that, the mind of Christ.

If this mind, then, is the mind of Christ—and the mind of Christ cannot be broken—and it was the mind of Christ that man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God, we must do as commanded, 1 Pet. 4: 1, arm ourselves "with the same mind."

Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God. Every word must be taken in, assimilated, and become a part of our very being, every commandment lived up to, every promise believed and built upon. Now one of these promises is divine assistance where human assistance is inadequate or lacking.

Angelic Ministration

The study of the angels, their origin, their work, their home, is one of the most fascinating subjects in the Bible; those heavenly servants of God, of whom the Bible reveals a great deal, but of whom we should like to know much more. The very existence of angels was a point of contention between the two most important Jewish sects in Jesus' time, the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and their relationship to men has been the subject of speculation throughout the ages. But since no man living today has seen an angel, we must go to the Bible for all that we know concerning them, which pictures angels as real beings, with material bodies, and with unlimited power. They are beings who were once human as we ourselves, and through virtue of a righteous life fitted themselves for perpetuation, and thus were given immortality.

Angelic ministration is the service that angels perform in the behalf of those who are to be the heirs of salvation. Hebrews 1: 14 pictures this service in sharp outline. Verse 13 is needed as a prelude: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?"

Before the material now making up the Word of God was written and compiled into a book—as we now have it in the Bible—God's will for mankind was transmitted to them directly through the medium of angels. This knowledge was essential to guide them through life, and prepare them for eternal salvation. Angels made personal contact with men, instructing and enlightening them by word of mouth. We have many case histories where this phenomenon came into play. Among the favored individuals who met angels face to face and conversed with them we find such names as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, King David, Daniel and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Later, in the New Testament times, there was Zacharias, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, her espoused husband. There was Jesus Himself, Peter, Paul, Cornelius, John the Revelator on Patmos, and others.

God's people were informed also through visions, the spirit of God acting and re-acting upon human intelligence, and by means of a process similar to what is known to us as telepathy, thought was transferred from the angelic to the human mind. In that way God's will was revealed to men.

Angelic Ministration—Invisible

The Word of God also pictures another type of divine assistance which, while it is less definable, and invisible,

it is none the less real and operative. One short verse in Psalm 34 reveals this plan, and the scope of its operation: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (v. 7). We should observe that this promise has no time limit to its application. To be eligible for coverage a person needs only one qualification: he must be a God-fearer. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that *fear* him, and delivereth them." In sickness or health, at sea, or on land, on the highway, in the factory, in the home, the promise of deliverance is sure to the God-fearer—that is, deliverance within the scope of what God has promised.

We are not automatically assured seventy, eighty, or eighty-five years of natural life. We have no guarantee that we shall have the use of two hands, two eyes, two ears, two feet, right to the very end of our mortal career, but we are assured that if exercising to godliness we shall have sufficient life, with the necessary physical and mental capacity, to accomplish the work. "For bodily exercise profiteth for a little time: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8). And Rom. 8: 28 completes the God-given insurance policy with these words: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

God does not always deliver; John the Baptist was not delivered. If a person has perfected his character, and God has no further work for him, it is not necessary for Him to deliver. John was one of those rare individuals who did the work of self-mastery in a surprisingly short time. Daniel's three companions were delivered, but in accepting Nebuchadnezzar's challenge they were not certain that it would be God's will to deliver them.

As we have just been saying, God's promise of divine care has two facets: angelic ministration, visible and invisible. First, let us refresh our minds on the former, angelic ministration, *visible*, or we might term it—

Angelic Visitation

One outstanding case history of visible angelic ministration is the case of Abraham when offering up his son Isaac as commanded by God. In Genesis 22 we see the manifestation of this golden link of angelic ministration, and we see how much it was needed. The angelic aid was administered where human hand could not reach, and that hand is stretched out still.

It suited God's purpose to confer a special blessing upon the patriarch Abraham. He was to be the progenitor of a race and, in a figurative sense, the father of all believers. In keeping with God's unequivocal demand for quality and worthiness, He saw fit to test Abraham's faith and obedience before making such a broad commitment to him. The test took the form of a command to take his only son Isaac, whom he dearly loved, and offer him for a burnt offering on a designated mountain in the land of Moriah, a three-day journey from his home site.

Taking with him his son, the fire, the wood, and the knife, and two of his men servants, Abraham started on the journey. Enroute his faith was tested still further by the soul-piercing question by his obedient son: "My father. . . Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" To this question Abraham answered appropriately: "My son, God will provide him-

self a lamb for a burnt offering." In this connection we should not overlook the testing of Isaac himself, a mature man thirty years of age, when at last it was revealed to him that he should be the lamb for the offering.

They reached the designated place and Abraham built the altar, laid the wood in order, bound his son, (still trusting deliverance would come) and laid him on the wood. He took the knife (manifesting his obedience), and reached forth his hand to use it—and to all intents and purposes had slain his son—when "the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

The ministering angel was present just when Abraham needed him most.

What a joyful sound this must have been to Isaac! But now Abraham was between two fires; he knew not what to do or which way to turn. He had been commanded to sacrifice his son, and the angel had called, when, as the Douay Version of the Bible reads: "he had proved him," and stayed that order, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon him." He knew not what next was in store, but looking around he saw a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, and he offered him for a burnt offering in place of his son. Here was the angel when Isaac's life was to be sacrificed. He was sent just at the time when he was needed to stay Abraham's hand.

Again the angel's services were needed to confirm the gracious promise, and he was there to render them. The narrative states: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22: 15—18). What a rewarding thing to obey the voice of the Lord, of His ministering angel.

There were other cases where angelic messengers appeared to Abraham. In fact, "messenger" is one of the definitions of the word angel. When the Patriarch was 75 years old the Lord, or angel of the Lord, appeared and told him to break away from his kindred, to leave his homeland, Haran, and remove to the land of Canaan, the place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance.

Over two decades later the Lord sent an angel to carry a message direct to Abram, and to speak with His own authority: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." At the same time He promised him a son which should be his rightful heir. We should not get the idea that the great God Himself appeared to Abram in this instance, as we are told that "No man hath seen God at any time" (1 John 4: 12). It must have been an angel speaking for God. The angels, being sons of God, are called by their Father's name, and often are referred to as God, the Lord, etc. The Hebrew word for God is El. The plural of this

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Fulfilled Prophecies

that Prove the Bible True



RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF JERICO.

The curse upon the city by Joshua seems to have hung over it during all the succeeding centuries.

PART VI

THE CURSE OF JERICO FULFILLED THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

THE PROPHECY

"Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Joshua 6:26.

Jericho was the first city captured by the Children of Israel in their conquest of the land of Canaan.

For six days the people marched around the walled city once a day in silence. On the seventh day they encircled the city seven times, and when the priests blew with the trumpets "the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

After the conquest of Jericho, Joshua pronounced the above curse upon it. The city evidently lay in ruins for some 500 years. In the reign of King Ahab it was rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite. Hiel "laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub," precisely as predicted by Joshua half a millennium previous.

Shortly before the birth of Christ, Mark Anthony gave the district to Cleopatra. She sold it to Herod the Great. He built a magnificent city about two or three miles from

the ancient site. A stone aqueduct brought water to the city from springs northeast of Jerusalem. Part of the aqueduct is still standing. Later Herod's magnificent city was destroyed, and today only a bare plain, with an occasional banana plantation, marks the spot where the beautifully adorned city once stood.

The curse pronounced by Joshua 3,400 years ago seems to have hung over the city throughout all the long centuries that have intervened since it was uttered. This is all the more significant in view of the delightful climate of the district in the winter, and of its luxuriant vegetation, and varied fruits, from grapes and oranges to bananas and dates—but cursed was Jericho and so it remains. The Word of the Lord is sure and is not spoken in vain.

(Adapted from *Fulfilled Prophecies that Prove the Bible* by George T. B. Davies. Used by permission of the author).



JERICO

Around the walls of Jericho, Marching on;
Behold the mighty army go, Marching on;
No loud huzza, nor beaten drum,
Acclaim them as they go and come,
Marching to the trumpet's blow,
Around the walls of Jericho!

Again, again the call resounds, Marching on;
Around the city's guarded bounds, Marching on;
The seventh dawn, and quiet reigns

Upon the Jordan's palmy plains,
Now the sun is shining low,
Upon the walls of Jericho!

O hear again the trumpet blast, Marching on;
It is the seventh and the last, Marching on;
O hearken now! The silence breaks,
And see! the mighty fortress shakes!
Now a blast, a shout, and lo!
The crumbling walls of Jericho!

The hosts of God are sure to win, Marching on;
Against the Jericho of sin, Marching on;
But not by might, nor strength, nor boasts,
But faith in Him, the Lord of hosts!
May the weakest arm o'er throw,
Thro' Him, the strongest Jericho!

Marching on! Marching on!
In the strength of God they go.
Marching on! marching on!
Fearing not the mighty foe,
On the arm of their God relying,
And the stronghold of sin defying;
Marching on! Marching on!
Around the walls of Jericho.

Self-Defense

ONE TIME, a young boy who had been out with some other boys, came home very enthused. He said, energetically to his mother, "We are learning self-defense. We are practicing it; there are several different methods."

"And what method are you practicing?" his mother asked.

The boy answered, "The best system is to hit the other person before he can hurt you."

"Oh, my son," she continued, "have you not heard about the *Solomon System* of self-defense? It is God's way and it is the best way. We find the *Solomon System* in Proverbs 15: 1. Here it is in a nutshell, 'A soft answer turneth away wrath.'"

We are all familiar with this lesson which the boy received. We have said it over many times: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Both Paul and Peter used this system of self-defense for we find this admonition in their letters to the Churches. "Never pay back a bad turn with a bad turn, or an insult with another insult, but on the contrary pay back with good" (I Pet. 3: 8; I Thess. 5: 15, Phillips). And Jesus, when He suffered, He threatened not. Goodness should be our objective always.

It is human nature to jump for self-defense, fearing that our ideas, our opinions, plans or name will be hurt. We must be sure that our ways are upright and our defense of God. We learn from Paul that by attacking each other in disputings, rivalry or strife, we consume one another's spirituality (Gal. 5: 15). On the other hand, by freely using the *Solomon System* of turning away wrath, we help each other.

Have you ever noticed when a wordy battle starts blowing, how a soft answer will take the wind right out of it? The fight is all gone and afterward, we can see, even in

our enemies, a burning sense of shame take the place of wrath.

How true it is that very often, as we give of good or ill to another, like an echo it comes back to us. It is like the little cityboy who was annoyed when, out in the country near some woods, he heard his echo for the first time. As he heard his own words calling back after him, he shouted to the woods, "Keep still, you mean fellow," and the voice shouted: "*Keep still, you mean fellow.*" When he learned, from his mother, what it was, he ran back to the woods and called loudly: "Let's be friends." At once the echo shouted back: "*Let's be friends.*"

So let us be careful about self-defense and never utter words or tones of voice that we would not like to hear echo back to us. Let us be friends by always using the *Solomon System*, avoiding and turning away wrath with a soft answer. Then, we can put our trust in the Lord and ever shout for joy because He (God) will defend us (Ps. 5: 11).



When we are wrong, help us to be willing to change,
and where we are right, help us easy to be, to live with.

Two professing Christians were once speaking of their experiences. The first said, "It is terrible to trust God and realize His hand in the dark passage of life." "Well, Brother," said the other, "if you cannot trust a man out of your sight, he is not worth much, and if you cannot trust God in the dark, it shows that you do not trust Him at all."



Deliver us, O Lord, from the foolishness of impatience.
Let us not be in such a hurry as to run on without Thee.
Let us remember that it takes a lifetime to make a tree.

Angelic Ministration

(Continued from page 5)

word is Elohim, which means "sons of God" or "angels."

Proof for this position is found in Ex. 23: 20, 21, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." This shows that the Almighty God does not come down to earth to attend to its affairs, but sends the angels as His personal representatives.

Again the angels appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre as he sat in his tent door at the heat of the day, and re-confirmed to Sarah and himself the promise of a son. At the same time the angel revealed the imminent destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The angel of the Lord also appeared to Abraham at other times, in addition to the afore-mentioned case of the offering of Isaac. Angelic ministration was purposeful. Their visitations always supplied a critical need.

(Continued in Next Issue)

Old Age Benefits

NEARLY EVERY employed person today, including the self-employed, is familiar with the term F. O. A. B.—Federal Old Age Benefits—currently known as Social Security. Undoubtedly the majority of our population either contribute to or receive from this type of insurance. Every thoughtful person recognizes the blessing to be derived from such a plan of forced saving. And it is interesting to observe what a small proportion of savings from a weekly earning can accomplish.

But our paramount concern as Christians is in G. O. A. B.—God's Old Age Benefit plan which became operative at His first call for employees. Actual testimony of one of the Almighty's employees has been on record for some three thousand years, showing how His plan works: "I have been young," said the Psalmist, "now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." However honest, diligent or saving a person might be in life, fate or disaster might bring him to poverty, but a Christian has the promise of sufficient to sustain life until his task of self-mastery is complete. This is but one phase of G. O. A. B.

One of the most satisfying benefits of our Heavenly Father's plan is peace of mind, having access to the peace of God which passeth all understanding, which shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And beyond this a bright eternal future.

There is one outstanding observation associated with the closing years of every successful Christian that we have known, and that is the satisfaction and contentment which surrounds him like a halo. No provocation ruffles him, no tragedy overwhelms him; having walked apart from the world's wickedness, he also dwells apart from its woes, in the imperturbable quietude of fellowship with Christ. When beholding him, we desire to be like him, calm, and self-controlled. We admire this, but to ever attain or even approach this disposition, we must "maul and master" our body, as the great apostle Paul said that he did, so the Spirit or truth of God is king over our disposition and emotions.

We like others, and even like ourselves, better for every evil conquered. So let's get busy! How much more genuinely satisfying is the feeling of humble self-conquest than the puffed-up feeling of pride.

In physical life the adolescent age is often called the foolish age. In the spiritual life as long as we are yielding to sin, we show that we have not left childhood, are in the foolish age and can never claim God's O. A. B., for we have nothing laid up to draw upon. We do not have to wait to be 63 or 65 years of age to receive benefits on these spiritual savings, but can claim them as soon as we have laid up reserves, made the necessary withholdings.

It is reassuring, as we see an earnestly working Christian growing older, to observe how much more patience, tolerance and consideration he or she has. We can see how his G. O. A. B. is increasing, and it gives us hope and courage to follow such an example and hasten the work so we too can begin enjoying the benefits from this insurance.

Probably every one has witnessed some elderly person who has made no effort to control himself according to

the Christian's rule of conduct, and thus become so stirred by temper that he nearly shook to pieces; or others whose conversation reveals how jealous they are; but for contrast, watch one who has been wrestling with these evil tendencies during his or her life by practicing self-control. It is then that we realize how they are benefiting from their life savings in God's O. A. B. plan. This insurance was not laid up in a few large payments, but like the employed person's deductions, a little at a time, not each week, but a *daily* payment of his vows. The feeling of resentment, the thought of self-importance, the hasty or unkind word withheld, these are the withholdings from which they are now drawing contentment.

As the federal financial benefits are increased according to one's earning power, so with these spiritual benefits, the more industriously we work, the greater the benefit to be derived.

If we should ever reach the days during our mortal existence when we have become physically unable to perform the many duties which we enjoy during our active years, we can be sure it will be a great source of comfort if we have allowed God's thoughts to nourish us. If the foolishness, which gets us nowhere, has been replaced with happy, hopeful anticipation of the future life; if the all-too-natural but narrow desire for self-exaltation has been enlarged to preferring one another, and the concern for our own—and our own immediate family's—welfare has been broadened to equal interest throughout the brotherhood; if we have broken our wills and learned to become easily entreated; if we can discern and condemn evil in ourselves and our close friends with the same degree of blackness as we do in others, and not call it white, or even gray, we shall discover that our payments into G. O. A. B. will repay us with a freedom known only to a disciplined and Christian life.

If we have trained ourselves to not have our minds crowded with the cares and things of time, but to continually keep that future abundant life a shining goal, these will be G. O. A. B. here and now.

While every form of virtue built into one's character brings satisfaction in old age, the greatest benefit of all will be the realization of the promise which God has promised the winners, "even life for evermore." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint . . . Happy is that people, that is in such a case! Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

FLOWERS WITHOUT FRUIT

Prune well thy words; the thoughts control,
That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul,
And change to purpose strong.

But he who lets his feelings run
In soft luxurious flow
Shrinks when hard service must be done,
And faints at every woe.

Faith's meanest deed more favor bears,
Where hearts and wills are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom this hour, and fade.

An Honest Man

(Continued from page 3)

spiritual merchandise without the "mark of the Beast." Truth was long since dead and forgotten, for the reason that there was no man worthy of it. A dark picture, indeed.

But even as the night seemed unending, there were premonitions of the dawn. The spirit of free thought had been feebly kept alive through the dark Middle Ages by the vain janglings and endless subtleties of Scholasticism. Political reform had its frail conception in the Magna Carta, and the literary culture jealously confined within the monasteries had flowered in the Renaissance and culminated in the pseudo-Reformation of the sixteenth century, a movement which left the entire foundation and structure of error undisturbed, but broke the Roman monopoly, freed the intelligence to a certain extent, and made the Scriptures available to the masses.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century something happened which marked the real turning point. A Genoese sea captain, sailing westward on a mad and suicidal expedition, rather unavoidably collided with the Western Hemisphere, or one of its outposts. The rest of this part of the story is familiar to every American. The discovery of this new world, a land without history but abounding in opportunity, was an event of tremendous spiritual significance. Nearly three centuries later a new nation took form, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Most revolutionary of all was the complete separation of church and state, although its founders were by no means atheistic. Before the law all creeds, like all men, were equal. As a result of this unprecedented liberty, nominal Christianity in all its myriad divisions, confused and confusing, flourished luxuriantly for another century before its influence began to wane as the advance of atheism, agnosticism, skepticism and general indifference to religion gathered momentum.

Throughout all this checkered scene, the unseen hand of the Eternal was directing events toward a definite end. Working slowly, never infringing upon man's free moral agency, its guidance was none the less sure. The very power which supplanted and denied the Word of God was made its custodian through the darkest and most barbarous periods. The steps toward political and religious liberty, the preparation of a new soil in the land of the free, even the decline of religion with its accompanying tolerance, were all divinely ordained in anticipation of the appearance of that almost forgotten rarity, an honest man.

For twelve centuries there had been no honest men. There had been wise men, fair men, trustworthy men, honorable men, sincere men, devoted men, unselfish men, men of gigantic minds and colossal abilities; but not a man of true intellectual honesty. A broad and sweeping statement, and the burden of proof which rests upon us we gladly accept, inviting others to prove to the contrary. A truly honest man will do the will of God, and Jesus promised that "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7: 17). The readily demonstrable fact that no one during this period knew the doctrine of Jesus, the prophets and apostles, convinces us that there were none with sufficient honesty to accept and live by

it. The most exacting search in all the literary productions of the time, from Augustine to Moody, fails to uncover Bible truth. It simply is not there. In every case there is the taint of intellectual dishonesty, a distortion of facts to fit a theory.

An honest man will admit that he knows less than God; one word of the Eternal is worth more to him than all the words of all the men on earth, be they never so wise or highly honored by church or state. Regardless of how much the natural mind may rebel (and it *will* rebel) against divine law, "let God be true, though every man a liar." This is a tremendous position to take, but the only tenable one for an honest man. Such a man has no axe to grind, no theological notions, original, borrowed or inherited, to confirm or uphold. He is bound to or by no system of human thought. He is ready and willing to face the world single-handed, if only he may find God and His truth. And finding truth, he will unhesitatingly follow where it leads, unmindful of the cost.

At long last, in the middle of the nineteenth century, an honest man appeared. L. T. Nichols was born in Elkhart, Indiana, October 1, 1844. Early in life he saw the vanity of earthly things and chose the better part, the unseen things which are eternal. When it became clear to him that the way to life was very strait and narrow, narrower than even he himself had suspected, he did not falter but instantly crossed the line into that narrow path. He could not do otherwise, for he was an honest man.

A normal human being, he met all the temptations to which normal beings are subject, besides those greater temptations and trials which only great souls can know. Trusting fully in God, knowing he could and must overcome, he overcame.

Now he belongs to the ages; he sleeps with the heroes of faith; his crown, we are confident, is laid up for him. The rushing of nations portends that the day of his resurrection and reward is near at hand. We have been unspeakably blessed in coming into the sphere of influence of an honest man.

He "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty" in doctrine and practice, relying wholly on the Word of God for his rule of conduct. In his unceasing honesty of purpose he won other honest men and women to tread with him the narrow way to holiness of character. God waited for such a man for 1260 long years. Do we realize the honor of living so close to him? Let this thought humble us; let us study his life and example; let us imitate his unflinching honesty that we may, with him, be reckoned among that royal family that will rule a reborn world in righteousness.

PURSUIT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Love ever gives,
Forgives, outlives,
And ever stands with open hands;
And while it lives, it gives,
For this is love's prerogative:
To give and give and give."



Let us grasp firmly the branch of hope, and climb higher the tree of life, because good fruit will be at the top.

Meditations

On the Word

"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation to him; and his righteousness it sustained him" (Isaiah 59: 16).

The Prophet is here speaking prophetically. The day for God's arm to bring salvation to the earth had not yet arrived when these words were recorded, nor has it yet come. But there need be no doubt that it will arrive. The promise of Jehovah, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14: 21), is as true today as when made over three thousand years ago. Time seems to tarry, and unbelieving men may say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3: 4). But no, the time does not tarry, things do not continue as they were. The world is growing rapidly worse. The last days are here, perilous times have come. Men have become "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, . . . unthankful, unholy, . . . traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3: 1-4).

Truly the time has arrived when it can be said there is *no man*. Where is the man able to bring together in peaceful negotiation even the major opponents in a divided world, to say nothing of the ability to mediate all the lesser misunderstandings? The tangled affairs in the world seem to defy solution, and the tangle is growing progressively worse. There is no intercessor, no one who can step between the rival factions in the world and bring about a recession in the spending for armaments, and establish lasting peace.

Verses 19 and 20 definitely associate this prophecy with the coming of Christ and the work of cleansing the earth from evil and iniquity that He will accomplish at His second coming. "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression."

For many years the hope of converting the world was a focal point around which the clergy sought to rally moral and financial support for the work of the Church. They chose for their slogan: "The Whole Wide World For Jesus." Surely every loyal Christian would delight in the instigation of a moral reformation thorough enough that it would bring the whole world to bend to the will of God. What a paradise the United States could be today if during the past fifty years our nation had grown steadily better and more godly! If by now the liquor traffic as an industry had all but vanished, and with the rank and file of individuals voluntary abstinence were the order; if our people had continually grown more law-abiding so that the police department in our cities had become only a token force, mainly as guardians of the public safety; if prisons everywhere were releasing their

inmates at the expiration of their term with very few fresh convicts to take their places; if politics had become all cleaned up so our officers were peace and our legislators legislated only for the common good; if night clubs, movies and places of amusement were closing their doors for want of patronage, while the churches were obliged constantly to expand their facilities to take care of the crowds that were coming to seek God—truly every lover of truth and righteousness would rejoice and be glad over a condition like this. But such is not the case, the trend is ever downward.

The Almighty foresaw and forewarned us that such would be the case. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3: 13). They would be "doing evil with both hands earnestly," maintaining a form of godliness but having nothing to do with it as a moral force in their lives, until the enemy, the evil, should come in "like a flood."

Organized crime is a multibillion dollar enterprise in our land today. Police forces and many officials of municipal and State governments find it convenient to accept a handout from the gambling interests and then look the other way. Unscrupulous men have been content to enrich themselves at the expense of the morality of youth, selling narcotics to high school students; among high public officials favoritism and acceptance of gifts has become common, until it is said the moral breakdown in America is so complete that the idea seems to be growing that "anything goes if you can get away with it." Verses 14 and 15 of Isaiah 59 in Dr. Moffatt's version confirm the foregoing exactly: "Justice has to turn away defeated, right is forced to hold aloof, for truth in our assemblies has no footing, honesty cannot enter there; truth is never to be seen, the moral sense has left the town."

But it is not God's plan to allow the earth always to be desecrated with evil as it is today; He ultimately will take a hand. And what honest man can compare world conditions with Scripture prophecy without being convinced the time for Him to take a hand is imminent? God has been waiting patiently, "enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom. 9: 22), but He will not always wait. He has been silent for nearly nineteen centuries, yet His voice soon will be heard, and what a rude awakening it will be for this sick, self-satisfied world!

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast," pleads the voice of divine wisdom over the ages. "For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. 26: 20, 21).

Soon Christ will return to earth equipped with power and authority to clean up the world and make it a fit place for righteous men and women to live in. In place of the laxity in law enforcement that is so prevalent these days, encouraging men to do evil, "sentence against an evil work" will then be "executed speedily," swift and adequate punishment follow every breach of conduct.

"Therefore his arm brought [or will bring] salvation to him; and his righteousness it sustained him."

And what a salvation that will be! Freedom from pain, disease, from the possibility of accident, and from death. Freedom from want, from fatigue, from disappointment,

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Questions and Answers



"I wonder if you could help me in answering a local minister who believes that Christ was kept somewhat in the dark as to the future plans of God for men. To prove his point he quoted a verse in which Jesus said that the end of the world would be witnessed by his generation? . . ."

It seems very improbable that Jesus could have been in the dark—or even partly in the dark—as to God's plan for the earth and mankind, during the three years of His earthly ministry. In Matthew 24, the chapter containing the text to which our correspondent refers, Jesus gives a preview of a number of events to be enacted on earth, some short range, some long range. Among these: the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple; also false Christs should arise. There should be wars and rumors of wars, but they were not to take each individual occurrence as a sign of Christ's immediate coming and the end of the age. The gospel should be preached to all the then-known world. He also foretold that His coming at the last day should be public and clearly visible.

Verses 21, 22 speak of a "tribulation" which the context reveals was to be psychic rather than physical, a time when God's saving knowledge should be fallen to the earth, all mankind turned from "truth" to "fables" (II Tim. 4:4).

In v. 29 Jesus, in employing the words, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," refers to the recrudescence of truth, the time when the "fig tree . . . putteth forth leaves."

Now v. 34, the text in question, reads, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." The point Jesus was making here was that the generation of people living when truth should again spring to life as a budding fig tree, would not pass till the things He had just foretold should be fulfilled.

A modern Biblical scholar has approached this seeming discrepancy in Jesus' teaching from another angle. He uses the word "generation" in a different sense. He makes the point that our word *generation* is flexible and not easy to define. It is usually taken to mean the people living upon the earth at any one time. And again it is taken to mean a single step or stage in the succession of natural descent. But it is evident that the word *generation* can be applied to anything that is generated. It is quite proper to say that electricity is the generation of a dynamo, and it is correct to call a dynamo a generator, (many car owners are familiar with this term).

Our commentator makes the point that "a careful study of the Greek word *genea*"—the word translated generation—"will bring the feeling that in some places it is used as a descriptive title to designate a segment or a portion of the Word of God . . . Since 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' (II Pet. 1:21), that which the Spirit generated or produced through them is rightfully referred to as a generation."

If Jesus used the word in this sense He could truthfully have said, "this generation," that is, the message of truth that God had produced by speaking through Him, would not pass away until all these things have been fulfilled. And then to add strength to this approach to Jesus' meaning He went on to say, "My words shall not pass away."

"Why do clergymen and all men of the cloth call themselves Reverends, Priests and Fathers? I was taught to believe that the most Reverend on high was God, and Jesus Christ the Son of God was the only Priest."

"A Quote from the Bible:

"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him." Luke 8: 1.

"Now the twelve did not call themselves Priests, Reverends, or Fathers. My belief is: 'gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people' Isa. 62: 10."

Those who object to the use of the title "reverend" usually take their cue from Ps. 111: 9, which reads: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." On the principle that God's name is holy and reverend, such people reason that no human should apply those appellations to himself or another human being. However their point is not too well taken, for the command is: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Pet. 1: 16). One who truly reverences God could be called reverend.

God's ministers prior to Christ's time were called priests, hence it might be difficult to condemn anyone for styling himself a priest.

Jesus was specific on the use of "father." He said: "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 23: 9). However the apostle Paul applied the term "father" indirectly to himself in I Cor. 4: 15, when he said: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

Among the religious leaders that you refer to there may be many who are not worthy of the titles you question, however if such a man is truly sincere in his work for God, proclaiming His Word faithfully (Jer. 23: 28), I doubt if he could be condemned for the title attached to his name.

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"Do you believe in women bobbing their hair?"

Not if they have it bobbed to conform with the fashion. The Bible is definite: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12: 2). It is conceivable that some other legitimate reason for a woman to bob her hair could exist, only in such a case could there be no transgression in doing so.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

(Continued from page 10)

from frustration. The bliss of the innumerable inhabitants of the new world, who during eternal years shall live under the benevolent authority of Christ the universal King, is fittingly pictured in Rev. 7: 16, 17, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"The Seeming Contradiction"

*A man I know, yet, know I not at all,
Is one who ever stands at beck and call;
Responsive always to my slightest whim,
No matter what the task I set for him.
My friend he would be, yet most truly he,
Of all my foes, is my worst enemy.
A riddle past all solving, loving, warm,
Yet daily in some way he doeth harm.*

*Control him? I have tried with some success,
Yet often he eludes me, and distress
Incalculable follows in his train,
And leaves me face to face with bitter pain.
His thoughts I know, and yet within his soul
He carries as it were a mystic scroll
That, try how hard I may to penetrate
Its meaning clear, I never can translate.*

*Why this good deed he does, or that of ill,
The deeds that dull all hope, or haply thrill
My heart and soul, I cannot comprehend--
My enemy today; tomorrow friend!
With joy and shame, alternating, through life
He fills my days with happiness--and strife.
My love--and hatred form his worldly pelf,
This man I know, yet know him not--Myself.*

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